

A. AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereinafter.

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-implemented method for determining an amount to be billed to a customer for the use of resources, the method comprising:
~~comprising the computer-implemented steps of:~~
determining usage data that indicates usage, by the customer during a specified period of time, of a set of one or more resources assigned to the customer, wherein over time, resources may be de-allocated from the set of one or more resources assigned to the customer and additional resources may be allocated to the set of one or more resources assigned to the customer that is capable of being selected and de-selected from a plurality of resources; and
in a computer system determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and value data that ~~indicates value provided by each resource from the set of one or more resources.~~ specifies a number of service units that each resource from the set of one or more resources is capable of providing per unit time.
2. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein:
the usage data indicates usage, during the specified period of time, of each resource from the set of one or more resources, and
the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer

based upon the usage of each resource from the set of one or more resources during the specified period of time and the value data.

3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein:
the usage data specifies, for each resource from the set of one or more resources, an amount of time that each resource was used during the specified period of time,
~~the value data specifies, for each resource from the set of one or more resources, a~~
~~number of service units per unit time, and~~
the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon ~~the specified number of services units per unit time for each resource~~ and the amount of time that each resource was used during the specified period of time.
4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in Claim 3, wherein the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the ~~specified number of serviceesservice units that per unit time for each resource~~ is capable of providing per unit time and the amount of time that each resource was used during the specified period of time includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the ~~specified number of service units that per unit time for each resource~~ is capable of providing per unit time, the amount of time that each resource was used during the specified period of time and an amount to be charged per service unit.

5. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data, the value data and a reservation fee for reserving the set of one or more resources.
6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in Claim 5, wherein the reservation fee includes a fee for reserving for the customer other resources from the plurality of resources that ~~were not used by the customer.~~ are not included in the set of one or more resources assigned to the customer.
7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein:
the method further comprises determining additional usage data that indicates usage, by the customer during the specified period of time, of one or more additional resources from the plurality of resources, and
the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data, the value data, the additional usage data and additional value data that ~~indicates value provided by each resource from the one or more additional resources.~~ specifies a number of service units that each of the one or more additional resources is capable of providing per unit time.
8. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the set of one or more resources comprise an initial resource configuration.

9. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the set of one or more resources comprise a virtual server farm.
10. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the plurality of resources includes one or more computing resources.
11. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 10, wherein one or more computing resources includes one or more processors.
12. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the plurality of resources includes one or more storage resources.
13. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 12, wherein the one or more storage resources include one or more volatile storage devices.
14. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 13, wherein the one or more storage resources include one or more non-volatile storage resources.
15. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 14, where in the one or more non-volatile storage resources include one or more disks.
16. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the plurality of resources

includes one or more computer software resources.

17. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 1, wherein the plurality of resources includes one or more communications link resources.
18. (ORIGINAL) The method as recited in Claim 17, wherein the one or more communications link resources includes one or more Internet connections.
19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable medium carrying ~~one or more sequences of one or more~~ instructions for determining an amount to bill a customer for the use of resources, the ~~one or more sequences of one or more~~ instructions including instructions which, when executed by one or more processors in a computer system, cause: ~~cause the one or more processors to perform the steps of:~~ determining usage data that indicates usage, by the customer during a specified period of time, of a set of one or more resources assigned to the customer, wherein over time, resources may be de-allocated from the set of one or more resources assigned to the customer and additional resources may be allocated to the set of one or more resources assigned to the customer that is capable of being selected and de-selected from a plurality of resources; and determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and value data that ~~indicates value provided by each resource from the set of one or more resources:~~ specifies a number of service units that each resource from the set of one or more resources is capable of providing per unit time.

20. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein:
the usage data indicates usage, during the specified period of time, of each resource from
the set of one or more resources, and
the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage
data and value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer
based upon the usage of each resource from the set of one or more resources
during the specified period of time and the value data.
21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19,
wherein:
the usage data specifies, for each resource from the set of one or more resources, an
amount of time that each resource was used during the specified period of time,
~~the value data specifies, for each resource from the set of one or more resources, a~~
~~number of service units per unit time, and~~
the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage
data and value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer
based upon ~~the specified number of services units per unit time for each resource~~
~~and~~ the amount of time that each resource was used during the specified period
of time.
22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 21,
wherein the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the

~~specified number of service~~service units ~~that per unit time for each resource is capable~~
~~of providing per unit time~~ and the amount of time that each resource was used during the
specified period of time includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer
based upon the ~~specified number of service units that per unit time for each resource is~~
~~capable of providing per unit time~~, the amount of time that each resource was used
during the specified period of time and an amount to be charged per service unit.

23. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the step
of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and
value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the
usage data, the value data and a reservation fee for reserving the set of one or more
resources.
24. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 23,
wherein the reservation fee includes a fee for reserving for the customer other resources
from the plurality of resources that ~~were not used by the customer~~.are not included in the
set of one or more resources assigned to the customer.
25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19,
wherein:

the computer-readable medium includes one or more additional instructions which,

when executed by the one or more processors, cause the one or more processors

to perform the step of determining additional usage data that indicates usage, by

the customer during the specified period of time, of one or more additional resources from the plurality of resources, and

the step of determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data and value data includes determining the amount to be billed to the customer based upon the usage data, the value data, the additional usage data and additional value data that ~~indicates value provided by each resource from the one or more additional resources.~~ specifies a number of service units that each of the one or more additional resources is capable of providing per unit time.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the set of one or more resources comprise an initial resource configuration.
27. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the set of one or more resources comprise a virtual server farm.
28. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the plurality of resources includes one or more computing resources.
29. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 28, wherein one or more computing resources includes one or more processors.
30. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the plurality of resources includes one or more storage resources.

31. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 30, wherein the one or more storage resources include one or more volatile storage devices.
32. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 31, wherein the one or more storage resources include one or more non-volatile storage resources.
33. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 32, where in the one or more non-volatile storage resources include one or more disks.
34. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the plurality of resources includes one or more computer software resources.
35. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein the plurality of resources includes one or more communications link resources.
36. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 35, wherein the one or more communications link resources includes one or more Internet connections.
37. (CANCELED)
38. (CANCELED)

39. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A billing apparatus for determining an amount to bill a customer comprising:

a memory configured to store usage data and value data, wherein the usage data

indicates usage, by the customer during a specified period of time, of a set of

one or more resources assigned to the customer, wherein over time, resources

may be de-allocated from the set of one or more resources assigned to the

customer and additional resources may be allocated to the set of one or more

resources assigned to the customer ~~that is capable of being selected and de-~~

~~selected~~ from a plurality of resources and wherein the value data ~~indicates~~

~~value provided by each resource from the set of one or more resources;~~

specifies a number of service units that each resource from the set of one or

more resources is capable of providing per unit time; and

a billing mechanism communicatively coupled to the memory and configured to

determine the amount to bill to the customer based upon both the usage data

and the value data.

40. (CANCELED)

41. (ORIGINAL) The billing apparatus recited in Claim 28, further comprising a memory configured to store the usage data and the value data.